

How to Build a Salad Table



Salad tables, also known as kitchen tables, are raised beds for gardening. They offer a way for all people, including those with limited mobility, to grow their own produce. As the name implies, many use the tables to grow lettuces and radishes, but others choose to grow herbs or other shallow-rooted plants.

Salad tables can be built using any 6-inch by 1-inch rot-resistant wood, such as white oak, cedar, cypress, or treated pine. The chemicals from treated pine will migrate about one-tenth of an inch into your growing medium. These types of wood are available at most home improvement centers.

The Pine Belt Master Gardeners use only cypress because it is inexpensive and repels insects.

The group builds two basic sizes of tables. The salad table is 72 inches long, 36 inches wide, and 6 inches deep. The herb table is 36 inches long, 24 inches wide, and 6 inches deep. They use two lengths of legs: 38 inches, which give 32 inches of ground clearance (ideal for wheelchair access), and 32 inches, which give 26 inches of ground clearance (ideal for standing access).

Rolls of fiberglass screen and hardware cloth are usually 36 inches wide, so a salad table should be no wider than 36 inches. It should be no longer than 72 inches.

Salad tables can be built to fit your space, but to minimize waste and maximize ease of assembly, these instructions will yield a salad table that is 36 inches long by 30 inches wide with 32 inches of ground clearance.



Materials and Tools

2 pieces of 36-inch long 6x1-inch wood
(longer sides)
3 pieces of 30-inch long 6x1-inch wood
(shorter sides and crosspiece)
8 pieces of 38-inch long 4x1-inch wood
1½-inch coated exterior wood screws
⅝-inch staples
galvanized roofing nails
30x36-inch piece fiberglass screen
30x36-inch piece hardware cloth
square
drill or electric screwdriver
staple gun
circular saw or table saw (if wood is not
precut)



Directions

1. Create the frame of the salad table top using the pieces of 6-by-1-inch wood. Screw two of the three shorter pieces to the two longer pieces to create a rectangle. Use 1½ inch or larger coated exterior wood screws. Be sure the corners are square.
2. Slide the other shorter piece of wood into the rectangle. For this table, you'll need only one crosspiece. If you make a longer table, be sure to place crosspieces about every 18 inches. Use wood screws to attach the crosspiece to the frame.
3. Turn the frame so that the side you want to become the bottom is facing up. Staple the fiberglass screen to the box with ⅝-inch staples.
4. Nail the hardware cloth over the fiberglass screen using galvanized roofing nails.
5. Now add the legs. Each leg is formed with two pieces of 38-inch long 4x1. The legs meet at right angles on the outside edge of each corner. Screw the legs to the table top using 1½" coated exterior wood screws.
6. Use a lightweight potting soil mix to plant your table. You can use transplants or seeds to fill your table with shallow-rooted plants. You may need to water more frequently in hot, dry weather.

The Pine Belt Master Gardeners have built over 272 tables and have salad tables in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Texas, Florida, Virginia, and Illinois.

Pine Belt Master Gardener Association is a volunteer organization of the Mississippi State University Extension Service and promotes responsible horticultural practices in accordance with the research and recommendations of the Extension Service.

For more information, contact:

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